(c) whether it is a fact that cartain steps towards efficient use of power was brought to Government's notice by a letter dated the 27th January, 1997;

(d) if so, the details of action taken in this regard; and

(e) if no action has been taken so far, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) to (e) A letter dated 27th January, 1997 had been received from a private lamp manufacturing company. Suggesting paying greater attention to demand side energy management, particularly in lighting. The suggestions made in the letter included using 36 W Triphosphor tubes, instead of 40 W fluorescent tubes. using electronic ballasts instead of electromagnetic ones and popularising the use of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) in place of incandescent GLS bulbs. The letter also, *inter-alia*, had suggested ways and means of pupularising the use of CFLs. including through utilising finance/leasing companies and reducing the price of energy efficient lamps and their accessories by rationalising the duty structure. Action has already been initiated by the Government to popularise energy efficient lighting devices. This includes addressing the State Governments to go in for only the more efficient fluorescent lamps in place of incandescent bulbs in public places and Government offices/establishments.

Sale of adulterated and inferior quality Basmati Rice by Kendriya Bhandar

*472. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that surprise checks conducted recently in Kendriya Bhandar branches in Delhi have revealed that Basmati rice being sold there, was adulterated and of inferior quality;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted in this regard and if so, the findings thereof and the punishment meted out to those found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) to (c) Kendriya Bhandar sells Basmati Rice of reputed brands in the packings of producers. Apart from this, Kendriya Bhandar has also been selling rice including Basmati type in its own packing of 1 Kg. after buying it in bulk. The rice sold meets the specifications prescribed in the Prevention of Food Audlteration (PFA) Act, and the same is released for sale only after proper testing to meet the above specifications.

No Basmati Rice has been found to be adulterated as per the PFA act, either at the time of pre-testing of goods before releasing them for sale, or 'on the shelf-testing'.

The rice in question was, however, got tested (by picking up samples from the shelf) with a view to finding the extent of Basmati grains therein. The percentage of Basmati grains as revealed during the tests carried out on two different dates (24.2.97 and 29.4.97) was considered low. It was, therefore, decided to stop sale of Basmati rice, procured from open market in bulk, in the packing of Kendriya Bhandar. No further enquiry in the Matter is, therefore, called for. However, the sale of brands of Basmati Rice in packings of the producers to meet customer demand continues.

Regulating Subsidised power Allocation to Export oriented units

*473. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 662 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 27th February, 1997, and state:

(a) whether there is any specific policy for regulating subsidised power allocation to export oriented units; and

(b) whether there is any monitoring agency to oversee the functioning of these units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) The allocation of power from Central Generating Stations to 100 per cent Export Oriented ferro-Alloys Units or Units with furnaces totally earmarked for export purposes is made on the basis of the following criteria:

(i) The cost of electricity should exceed 35% of the total cost of production.

(ii) The tariff payable will be the rate applicable for Central Generating Station from which power is allocated plus the wheeling charges prescribed by Power Grid/State electricity Board.

A monitoring system has been introduced to assess the requirement of power based on consumption norms and volume of exports.

Branches of RRBs in Rural and Backward Areas of North Eastern

*474. DR. B.B. DUTTA Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state;

(a) the number of braches of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) functioning in North Eastern States, particularly in rural and backward areas;

(b) the amount of loans disbursed by them during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) the percentage of such loans in comparison to total deposits in banks during the said period;

(d) whether Government propose to open more branches of RRBs during 1997-98; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) (a) The details of branches of the Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) functioning in North Eastern States (NES), including branches in rural, semi-urban and urban areas, are given at statement I. (*See* below).

(b) and (c) The details of loans disbursed by RRBs in NES and percentage of loans disbursed to outstanding deposits for the years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 are furnished at statement-II (*See* below)

(d) and (e) It is left to the judgement of the individual banks to assess the need for opening additional branches within their service area. After obtaining the approval of the Board of Directors, the banks have to approach Reserve Bank of India (RBI), through National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD), for grant of permission for opening new branches. As reported by NABARD, Pragjyotish Gaonlia Bank in Assam has applied, in November, 1996, for opening three new branches at Lakhipur, Krishnai and Dhopdhara. The matter is under correspondence between NABARD and the RRB. No other proposal for opening of new branches has been received by NABARD from any other RRB in the North Eastern States.